



R B F & R S

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CHECK YOUR OUTBUILDINGS THIS NATIONAL SHED WEEK

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is supporting National Shed Week (5-11 July) by urging people to take care what they store in their sheds and outbuildings.

National Shed Week is run by www.readersheds.co.uk to celebrate the nation's love of sheds. Celebrity judges, including property expert Sarah Beeny, will choose the 'Shed of the Year 2010' during the week from pictures sent in by the public.

While some people use their sheds as a place to relax, many keep substances such as paint, petrol and gas cylinders, including LPG and acetylene in them - without realising the potential dangers. In the event of a fire, these substances can explode, posing a serious risk to life and property. Acetylene cylinders (commonly used in welding) are particularly hazardous, as the risk of them exploding remains for up to 24 hours after the fire has been put out.

You can reduce the risk of a fire in your shed or outbuilding by following these simple tips:

- Make sure hazardous substances are stored securely in approved containers.
- Only store what you need to use – dispose of any unwanted chemicals correctly and return empty cylinders to the manufacturer (details are on the shoulders of the cylinder).
- Reduce the risk of deliberate fire and theft by keeping your shed or outbuilding in a good state of repair and secure. Consider directing a security light onto it as a deterrent.
- Take care with electrical items such as TVs and radios – look out for signs of dangerous or loose wiring and never overload sockets. Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Never put a barbecue into a shed while it is still hot as it can easily cause a fire.

Paul Jacques, Group Manager for Community Safety, said: "Sheds and outbuildings can be a target for theft and deliberate fires but you can reduce the risk by keeping them locked and well maintained. If you are buying or building a new shed or outbuilding, make sure you site it as far away from your house as possible to reduce the risk of fire spreading in an emergency.

"Why not use National Shed Week as an opportunity to make sure you have stored any hazardous substances in your shed or outbuilding safely and securely?"

ENDS.